THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SMT. MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The National Forest Policy 1988 states that National goal should be to have a minimum one third of total land area of the country under forest or tree cover.

The minimum per capita forest cover required in the country for sustainable development is estimated to be 0.4 hectares. This is against 0.11 hectares of the forest area per capita available at present.

(b) National Wastelands Development Board was set up in 1985 with the aim of implementing a massive programme of afforestation in the country with the people's participation.

Contract for construction of Flats in IIT

2211. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi had awarded a contract about two years ago for construction of flats for Professors and Lecturers of the Institute;

(b) if so, what was the amount of the contract and how and to which organisation the contract was awarded; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the said contract was awarded without calling for open tenders; if so, what action has been taken by Government against the officials of the IIT, who were instrumental in awarding the contract without floating tenders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The amount of the contract was Rs. 222.5 lakhs. Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, an institute established by an Act of Parliament has well established norms to award tenders and to look after the construction programme, and is advised by its Building and Works Committee established as per the IIT Act. This Committee, in accordance with these norms decided to award the work to National Buildings Construction Corporation at the then prevalent market rate after suitable negotiations.

IAF-Mirage 2000 Aircraft flying without Armaments

2212. SHRI KAPIL VERMA: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Air Force aircraft MIRAGE 2000 flew for almost two years without any major armaments as there was none in the I.A.F. inventory;

(b) if so, what were the reasons therefor;

(c) when was the acquisition of aircraft completed and when was the contract for weapons signed; and

(d) whether there was a time-lag between the acquisition of the aircraft and the armaments for it; if so, what were the reasons there for?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The acquisition of the aircraft was completed by September, 1988 while the contracts for weapons were signed between Octo-

ber, 1984 to April, 1986. When the aircraft was initially contracted for, some of the weapons were under development/clearance by the manufacturers and it was stipulated in the agreement that these would be made available as and when they were cleared.

Selection of Non-Technical Group-Captains in IAF

2213. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether principle of natural justice is being observed in the selection of Non-Technical Group Captains in Indian Air Force in due consideration of (i) equivalent past performance of the aspirants since beginning of their career (ii) disposal of their grievance application to the satisfaction's of aggrieved officers (iii) award of discretionary weightage by the selection panel for any unfair advantage/handicap of one officer vis-a-vis other due to service conditions resulting in unequal advantage/disadvantage in respect of (a) continued stay of personnel over a long period at one place with same officer (b) changes of postings/appointments, initiating and Reviewing officers and (c) provision of simiar apportunities for individuals growth by the Organisation; and

(b) whether the selection panel obtain factual details on these points and moderate the undue advantages/handicaps pertaining to individuals to put everyone on new equal footing without any bias?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) Yes, Sir. The principle of natural jutice is being observed in the selection of non technical Group Captains in the IAF.

(i) Appraisal reports and other relevant records of the officers for the past seven years are taken into account;

(ii) Disposal of grievance applications is done at the appropriate level based on the facts of the case and final decision is communicated to the officer.

(iii) (a) and (b) While awarding assessment marks, the Promotion Board takes into account the past posting profile of the officer as also the service under respective Initiating and Reviewing Officers.

(c) Opportunities are provided to officers for their growth as dictated by the requirements of the Service.

(b) All relevant data and records are made available to the Promotion Board members when considering an officer for promotion.

SC/ST IAS Officers on the Panel of Secretaries add. Secretaries and Joint Secretaries

2214. SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe I.A.S. Officers categorywise and year of allotmentwise, who by seniority are eligible for the posts of Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries in Government of India ;

(b) what is the number of SC/ST I.A.S. Officers categorywise and year of allotmentwise, who are on the panels for the posts of Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and Joint Secretaries and how many of them, inspite of offering their services to Government of India have been denied such postings due to them and the reasons thereof ; and

(c) whether it is a fact that after about two decades of service, some